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DOWNS: Up front tonight, an exclusive report on a first-class mystery in the dangerous world of America's spies. Now for most of us, our sense of the lethal twists and turns in the game of spy versus spy comes from fiction. Tom Jarriel is here tonight, and Tom, you've been investigating one of those rare situations in which spies surface just enough for us to get a look at them anyway.

JARRIEL: And it's a very unusual look, Hugh, into the life and maybe even the death of a master spy for the Central Intelligence Agency.

DOWNS: That's what's intriguing. Maybe the death.

JARRIEL: This guy's life was so mysterious, it's not even sure that he is dead. The CIA won't confirm that he ever worked there.

DOWNS: What is certain is that he knew some of the nation's most important secrets, though.

JARRIEL: Definitely, from interviews with people who knew him and also, papers provided by his family for us, we are able to reveal some unusual details about his strange career. As is so often the case in a mystery like this, this story begins with the discovery of a corpse. The tranquility of the place belies the mystery and the nature of the death that occurred here. This is where the body was found, a remote Maryland farm, about one hour's drive outside of Washington, D.C. The date, Nov. 15th, 1982, and this is the body they found. State Police identified it as George Weiss, owner of the farm. (film clip) Police said Weisz killed himself in this garage, using a garden hose attached to the exhaust pipe, which pumped carbon monoxide fumes into the car where he sat. The Maryland state medical examiner agreed. The official ruling, suicide. Four days after the body was found, it was cremated, and the case was closed, but there's more to it than that. George Weisz's life and death are a complex puzzle whose pieces still don't fit. 20/20 has been investigating the death of George Weisz for 18 months, and two key points have emerged, never disclosed until now. Point one, there's evidence the body in the car was not that of George Weisz. Point two, Weisz was no ordinary CIA agent, but for 30 years had been one of this country's most important spies. Even after that, Weisz was in charge of protecting America's most sensitive nuclear secrets from terrorists and enemy agents. In the tradition of master spies, George Weisz was faceless, anonymous. DONAL\WEISZ (son): He was very, very high up, very high up. He was so important that nobody knows who he was. FRANK\SNEPP (former CIA agent): He was the model CIA man, the model spy. He was a very effective operator, in fact, one of the most effective I've ever met. If you wanna talk about a John Le Carre character, you talk about George Weisz.

JARRIEL: This cable, found among his personal effects, was sent to Weisz by one of his CIA superiors, quote, 'There is no aspect of clandestine operations in which you were not heavily engaged... There are many in which your own approach and imagination accounted for an advance in the state of the art,' unquote. The list of George Weisz's CIA assignments around the world is a roster of espionage hot spots. In the '50s, it was postwar Berlin, 100 miles inside Communist

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territory, the CIA's number one European spy post. George Weisz's children recall a bizarre childhood. DONAL\WEISZ: I grew up with the CIA. The children that I played with, the people that were my father's colleagues and my mother's friends are a Who's Who of the CIA in Europe. NIKKI\WEISZ (daughter): I had to remember people that we knew suddenly having different names or people that we'd call uncle this or that, and then suddenly they would have other last names. But I never really knew why.

JARRIEL: Who was your Uncle Bill? DONAL\WEISZ: Bill Harvey, the famous Bill Harvey, who blew his brains out in Rome.

JARRIEL: CIA. WEISZ: Oh, heavy CIA from the beginning. Bill Harvey was the man who, uh, was the man who, uh, pulled off one of the greatest coups, spy coups, in the history of the Cold War. He's the one who tapped, he tapped the Russian telephone lines in East Berlin.

JARRIEL: In the '60s, the big job for the CIA was in Vietnam, and so was George Weisz. SNEPP: His job in Saigon was extremely powerful.

JARRIEL: Frank Snepp is an ex-CIA agent and an ABC News consultant on another topic. Snepp wrote a book condemning the agency's policies in the Vietnam War. SNEPP: I was an analyst for the CIA station in Saigon. Weisz was running the division of the station which was designed to track Communist agents and to neutralize 'em. In layman's terms, that means kill them, capture them, turn them around and what have you.

JARRIEL: After Vietnam, Weisz went back to Berlin but this time as CIA chief there. In 1974, a promotion. Weisz came back to CIA headquarters in Washington as chief of staff of the agency's Covert Operations Department, dirty tricks. The spy was not to remain home for long, with the next assignment for George Weisz, Vienna. There was a hint that something big was in the works. Weisz was placed in charge of CIA operations here in Vienna, the city where the big boys, the CIA and the KGB, would try to outfox each other in one of the biggest spy deals ever. It was the bizarre and mysterious incident that came to be known as the *Shadron affair. Nicholas Shadron was the highest ranking Soviet military defector to the U.S. ever. In 1975, he was in Vienna for a meeting with Soviet spies, an unprecedented rendezvous, arranged by the CIA. Shadron vanished, never to be seen again. What happened? In the dangerous and ever-murky world of spy and counter spy, it may never be known. One theory is that George Weisz might have masterminded the whole operation, sending Shadron back to the Russians in a complex double deal. SNEPP: After all, that was his game, setting up, setting up an environment in which your opposition, the KGB, the Soviet intelligence people, would be so confused they might even end up killing off some of their own agents out of suspicion or confusion. That's the doublethink game. You want a master at that, you got 'im, George Weisz.

JARRIEL: A few years later, the master spy was forced to retire. A new CIA director began the wholesale firing of cloak-and-dagger type agents in favor of spying by computer and satellite, but Weisz rebounded, landing a top job in the Department of Energy. For three years, Weisz was responsible for protecting our entire nuclear weapons production complex against terrorists and enemy spies. In the year before his alleged suicide, Weisz earned $91,000 working as a consultant on several highly classified projects. One of them, a Pentagon intelligence operation, was doing work so secret that Weisz was required to work

Continued

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in a vault. Among Weisz's papers, ABC reporters found a fascinating clue as to what he might have been working on in that vault. These notes were a meeting with his Pentagon boss discussing whether an enemy spy could penetrate the White House. So our investigation shows George Weisz was one of the few men who had access to many of America's top secrets--secrets about CIA operations around the world, secrets about our production of nuclear bombs. Did Weisz commit suicide? To the Maryland State Police, it was clear. There was this note in Weisz's handwriting that said simply, 'I am tired.' There were reports of career setbacks and a broken romance with a younger woman, but 20/20's investigation raises serious questions about the official version of the death, including the possibility that the body found in the car was not that of George Weisz. This is the autopsy report on the body found in the car, and it states that there were, quote, 'no changes in the gallbladder.' I'll repeat that, 'no changes in the gallbladder.' That means, according to medical experts, that when the body identified as George Weisz, the one in the car, was autopsied, a normal gallbladder was found. Now take a look at this document. It's part of George Weisz's official medical records. Detailed surgical notes taken during an operation on Weisz on June 14th, 1978, at a military hospital in Frankfurt. Quote, 'The gallbladder was now removed.' So George Weisz had no gallbladder. This is Dr. Hormez Guard the medical examiner who did that autopsy. Last August, Dr. Guard was questioned by ABC News. Reporter Chuck Lewis asked about his findings. ABC: There was a gallbladder? GUARD: Yes. ABC: If the gallbladder had been removed, you would have noticed it? GUARD: If it was removed, but that's not the case.

JARRIEL: A few days later, we interviewed Dr. Guard on camera. By now he was aware of the medical records showing Weisz's gallbladder had been removed. In your report, you say you found no changes in the gallbladder, which indicates there was a gallbladder there. HORMEZ GUARD, M.D. (medical examiner): Well, I believe so, but I, I'm not so sure as to I paid any great attention on the gallbladder.

JARRIEL: But what about the big scar that a gallbladder operation leaves? (to Donal Weisz): Did your father have a gallbladder scar, and if so, did you ever see it? WEISZ: Oh, God. Yes, my father had a gallbladder scar that...

JARRIEL: Was it conspicuous? (indicating abdominal region) It went from here to here. We were on my deck Sunday, and he took off his shirt, and I went, 'What happened to you? Did you run into a machete?' And he said, 'Oh, no, I had my gallbladder removed.'

JARRIEL: Dr. Guard insists he would have noticed a large gallbladder scar had there been one, but in the autopsy report on the body found in the car, the one identified as George Weisz, there was no mention of any scar. Weisz's daughter, she's only one possible explanation. NIKKI\WEISZ: The explanation is that the body could not be the same, not...

JARRIEL: Not your father's body in the autopsy. WEISZ: No, I mean, it, it seems to me pretty impossible.

JARRIEL: So how was the body identified as George Weisz? Not knowing about the missing gallbladder, the police were satisfied. They had found the body in George Weisz's car, in George Weisz's garage, on George Weisz's farm. DET.\SGT.\JOHN\REBURN (Maryland State Police): So we take his driver's license.

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On there is a picture of him. It's a good picture, and that picture to the investigators, that is George Weisz in that car.

JARRIEL: Police say this man, Dale Young, a tenant on the Weisz farm, was the one who positively identified the body in the car as that of George Weisz. Young did not wish to speak on camera, but he told 20/20 he never got close enough to see the body clearly. Young said he was surprised to learn that he had provided the formal identification. When shown the close-up photograph of the body, Young said that doesn't look like Weisz to him. there was more confusion at the funeral home when three members of the family finally saw the body. Daughter Nikki said, 'That's not my father.' NIKKI\WEISZ: It just didn't look like the person that I knew.

JARRIEL: When Weisz's wife, Etta Jo, saw the body in the coffin, she blurted out, 'That's not my husband.' But Weisz's older son, David, who works for the U.S. government and is stationed in Pakistan, David was certain the body was that of his father, and the order for cremation was signed. Sgt. Reburn says he showed a picture of the body in the car to Donal Weisz. REBURN: I said, 'Is that your father?' And Donal told me that that was his father, George Weisz.

JARRIEL: Donal Weisz says he has no recollection at all of that exchange ever taking place. He says this about the body and the photo. WEISZ: Apparently someone who resembles my father but I don't believe that it's my father. It could be, but it's not.

JARRIEL: In addition to Donal, Weisz's wife and his daughter say this police photo of the body is not George Weisz. In trying to get to the bottom of all this, 20/20 asked the Maryland Medical Examiner's office for pictures taken at that autopsy. We were repeatedly told no such pictures were taken. Indeed, the autopsy records indicate that no photos were requested, but nine months after we were assured that no autopsy photographs existed, and not long after we told them about the gallbladder discrepancy, the Medical Examiner's office produced some photos. The family said that this picture does appear to be George Weisz, but this photo does not answer the crucial question, 'Did the body that was autopsied have a large gallbladder scar as did George Weisz?' This morgue picture doesn't help much either. The shirt is off, but the Maryland Medical Examiner's office says there's no full-length nude shot, a picture that would tell us whether or not that scar is there. No photo, they claim, that would solve the mystery. SNEPP: It is not inconceivable that the CIA or whoever would have substituted Weisz's face for that of the body in tampering with the photograph. Again, it's so very easy.

JARRIEL: With cremation, the identification mystery may never be solved. The last best chance was at the autopsy, but no fingerprints were taken, no X-rays, no dental charts, steps that could have provided positive identification of George Weisz. In fact, the key test, checking for drugs that might have contributed to his death, routine in cases like this, seems to have been requested, then crossed out. So this drug screen, which might have determined if something other than carbon monoxide contributed to the death, was never done. The State Police indicate they might have pressed their investigation further if federal agents had only told 'em more about George Weisz. REBURN: I feel that if George Weisz was such a high operative and it was a factor in the security of our country, our agencies could have... They were notified. I did what I felt was right in notifying them. They certainly dropped the ball by not

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stepping forward and saying to the State Police, 'Hey, this guy here,' we should, you know, we should show a little more interest in him. We handled it as a suicide, a routine suicide, and did what we felt had to be done.

JARRIEL: The police say they have no plans to reopen the case, but there is that matter of the gall bladder and the question of who that really was in the car. The Weisz family lawyer wants a better explanation. TOM\SIPPEL (family attorney): You cannot overlook the possibility that if, in fact, there was a gallbladder on that body that was autopsied, that it was not George Weisz. Cases have been won and lost on less evidence than that. DONAL\WEISZ: It would be nice to know that he was dead. There is no evidence, no clear evidence, that he is dead.

JARRIEL: So what really happened? Well, we certainly don't know for sure, but there is an interesting footnote to all this. This week the CIA telephoned 20/20 to say that the agency had not killed George Weisz, and what's strange about that is we never asked.

DOWNS: What does that mean? Does that imply that maybe sometimes they do? What do you see as...?

JARRIEL: As a policy, they say they don't any longer.

DOWNS: What is, do you see as the possibilities here? I know there are a lot of 'em.

JARRIEL: They're intriguing and they're endless, Hugh. First of all, his greatest value would be to the Russians? Did they kidnap him, substitute a body and take him off somewhere to try to pick his brain for that classified information he had? A second possibility is that George Weisz is an eternal spy, he's off on another assignment and this was all a cover for a new assignment. That would be very cruel to his family, though.

DOWNS: Yeah, it would.

JARRIEL: A third possibility is that there was lax police investigation, a mix-up at the morgue and George Weisz did indeed commit suicide as the authorities contend.

DOWNS: Do you think we'll ever know?

JARRIEL: I doubt it.

DOWNS: Thank you, Tom.

Richard Mitchell, Transcriber

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